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# *Management Training*

for Supervisors and Staff Officers

## Unit 12 Controlling

Soil Conservation Service  
U. S. Department of Agriculture

(May 1959)



You cannot teach a man anything;

You can only help him to find it within himself.

Galileo



UNIT 12  
CONTROLLING

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To understand the need for controlling.
- (2) To understand and recognize controls in SCS.
- (3) To learn how to use controls for evaluating performance and improving efficiency.

What are controls?

Controls are those management methods used for establishing standards, evaluating actual performance measured against those standards and taking corrective action when necessary.

What are the purposes of controls?

Controls are used to insure that: Right quantity and quality of work are produced in an acceptable manner; work is completed on time; waste and inefficiency are held to a minimum; checks are made on progress; work is performed in accordance with a plan and best methods are employed.

If every person were completely informed and worked at high efficiency, we would still need controls because new ideas, new methods, and standards are constantly being devised or reviewed. All persons are different. Initiative, enthusiasm, interests and interpretation of standards by people are not alike.

Controlling is a management responsibility.

Persons and things are all attached to something. An electrical switch is of no value unless it is attached to electrical current which it is prepared to control. An automotive battery is without value in itself. It must be attached to an automobile to utilize its powers.

An SCS employee is attached to an organization, and how well he performs is measured by the degree he is attached to the policies, standards, procedures, and principles of his organization. It is the responsibility of management to see that these attachments are secure. A means for development of attachment is through the orderly use of controls.

Let us look at controlling and confine our discussion to those things that fit into the definition of controlling; i.e., establishing standards, evaluating actual performance measured against those standards and taking corrective action when necessary. These discussions lend themselves to:

1. Establishment of standards.
2. Evaluating actual performance against the standards.
3. Taking corrective action when necessary.

#### I. Establishment of Standards

##### Programs are broad in nature.

Programs are usually broad in nature and are provided by administrative direction or legislation. Within the broad phases of program activities, we must have measuring sticks to show how the actions required must be performed, when the work is to be done, and what quality of work is expected. This is accomplished through the development of standards and their by-product procedures. Thus essentially everything an SCS employee does has some measure of control.

##### Standards What they are.

A standard is that which is set up and established by authority as a rule for measuring quantity, quality, weight, extent or value. Stated another way it is a model or example established by authority, custom, or general consent.

The budget officer cannot spend more money than is allotted or he will be in violation of standards set by antideficiency legislation.

The personnel officer has employment controls, classification controls, promotion controls and other standards or procedures governing his actions.

The farmer upon whose farm a pond is being constructed under the Agricultural Conservation Program has limits as to how much financial aid he can receive, and the aid or engineer who is designing the structure has standards set for the height of the dam. He must know the drainage area, how much water the dam is to impound. He must know the financial ability of the farmer and his ability to perform desired operation.



The Soil Scientist has standards to follow in making soil surveys. The Conservationist follows definite standards and procedures as he assists farmers with the development of conservation plans. Aids use technical guides and specifications as they assist with the establishment of conservation practices. These are all standards used as measures of control in the Soil Conservation Service. There are many others. Can you list ten?

Policies become standards for control.

Policy may be defined as a settled course of action setting forth broad principles for operation.

Policy-making is limited to line officers.

National policies are provided by the Administrator within the framework of legislation and the decisions of the Secretary of Agriculture. State policies are provided by the State Conservationist. Within the scope of policy, standards and procedures establish the criteria for accomplishing the objectives of programs.

Staff officers assist in policy making.

Staff officers provide information and counsel to line officers in determining the need for new or revised policies, standards, and procedures and thus have a responsibility for helping make the controls that govern their actions.

Procedures state the manner, or way to accomplish an objective.

In addition to policy statements and standards, more detailed outlines of how a job is to be done come through recognized procedures, which define the manner or way for carrying out policies and standards. Policy or standards define the general course of action or the goal that is to be achieved. Procedure develops the details of how an action is to be accomplished.

Following procedures a typist determines how a letter is to be framed, how many copies are needed, and how she is to file or record the created letter or document.

Similarly, guiding procedures control our actions in the budget process, the building of a terrace and the training of personnel -- all within policy and standards.

People are our most valuable asset.

We have been talking about broad policies, standards and procedures. Now let us talk about our most valuable asset -- people. No program, policy or procedure can be effective unless there

Standards for each job set up within overall standards to accomplish objectives.

are understanding personnel. Each employee has different characteristics, physical and mental, different temperaments, varying abilities, desires and inclinations. People must be fitted into an organization in accord with their ability, training and experience. An otherwise capable employee may be a problem if he is placed in the wrong position, has inadequate training, or is in improper environment. Every employee should receive the same salary for the same kind of work performed. For these reasons, classification and employment standards are established to properly define how he shall be employed, what standards he must meet, and how he is expected to perform his job.

Jobs are classified and described.

Standards are established for each job and employees are secured whose qualification and training meet those standards. Position descriptions are given to the employee to inform him of duties and responsibilities he is to assume in line with the classification standard for the job. As assignments are made or changes made in the assignment this job is redescribed. The job is controlled through inspection, reports, and analyses of the quantity and quality of the work performance.

Each employee needs a Standard of Performance.

To insure that the employee understands completely what is expected of him a Standard of Performance is prepared. This Standard of Performance recites the major duties to be performed and the quantity and quality of work expected. Additional standards such as procedural methods, guides, and handbooks are made available to the employee for his guidance.

As cited in Unit 3, the supervisor must know his employee and the employee must know what is expected of him.

We need standards for material, equipment, and working conditions.

Personnel must have adequate working space and sufficient equipment and supplies as working tools. Even these must have controls set for them. Cramped quarters do not lend to efficiency. So standards are set to determine the amount of space needed per person, how it is to be lighted, heated, and ventilated. Similarly, specifications decide what kind of a dumpy level is to be acquired; what type of automotive equipment is to be purchased; what kind of mimeograph paper is best suited to our needs; what specifications are to be used in construction of a waterflow

retarding structure; and what types of seed and the kinds of fertilizer are to be used in seeding a pasture.

Money affects standards and controls.

Someone has said that the love of money is the source of all evil. Excess amounts of or the lack of money resources can be detrimental. The Congress annually appropriates money to the various governmental agencies for the operation of their programs.

How money is secured.

Much planning and study of needs must be made in advance. The SCS must study its objectives; know how many employees are needed, and how much they will cost; and how much is needed for materials, equipment, supplies and services. When this study has been completed, the request for funds goes to the Department. The Department submits recommendations to the Bureau of the Budget; thence, it is submitted to the President who makes recommendations to the Congress.

The requests are assigned to the appropriate agricultural appropriation committees and eventually a report is made to the Senate and House for consideration and authorization into law. Thus, from the beginning, controls are established in planning for, authorizing, and appropriating money.

After Congressional and Departmental authorizations are made, the Bureau must apportion the funds.

After authorizations are made by the Congress, the Bureau of the Budget and the Department, the SCS must apportion the money among the various states in accordance with money available and needs. The SCS determines how the money is to be spent in accordance with these apportionments. Limits are set for personnel and other expenses for specified periods of time. No funds in excess of the apportionment may be used or the agency will be in violation of the antideficiency law, which prevents overobligation of apportioned funds.

Personnel must know how to plan expenditures.

We, therefore, have restrictions placed upon us which govern our use of personnel, materials, equipment, supplies and services. We must recognize what is needed as compared with what is desired. Schedules, priorities, job requirements, and effective use of time are controlling devices which enter into planned expenditures of funds.



## II. Evaluating Performance Against Standards

Each agency must make inspections to observe how legislative and administrative mandates are being carried out.

Performance must be  
evaluated against  
standards.

Some employees resent supervision; others resent inspection of their work. Some think inspections are for the purpose of finding fault with what is being done. The fact is supervision and inspection have the purpose of finding the good and bad. Every inspector hopes he can find everything good; and if he finds something not so good, he wants to help the person or group find ways and means for improvement.

Employees want to know  
where they stand.

Every conscientious employee wants to know how well he is doing his particular job. He is entitled to know whether his operations are within the scope of recognized standards, law, policy, and procedure.

### A. Evaluation by Internal Audit.

Programs and work  
should be appraised.

To perform these functions, there has been established a system of program appraisal and internal audit.

In the internal audit process, policy, standards and procedures are observed. Methods are studied to see whether there is overlap, duplication, waste and inefficiency. Program appraisal and internal audits appraise: (1) efficiency of operations; (2) reliability of accounting, statistical and other existing records and reports; and (3) the extent to which personnel understand and follow the provisions of law and Departmental and SCS policy and standards.

### B. Evaluation by Inspection.

What is inspection?

Inspection is an authorized examination of performance, and a comparison of findings with established standards.

Note that this definition implies that standards must be established before any inspecting is done. This point is often overlooked, but it is deserving of emphasis.

Inspection necessarily involves consideration of the following:

1. The conditions under which work is performed.

2. Work going on, work that has been done, and work that is planned for the future.
3. How the work is done; i.e., something of methods, techniques, and procedures used to get it done.

And finally, once these 3 points are clear:

4. A comparison of the quality and quantity of the finished work with quality and quantity standards for such work.

Adequate inspection requires that projected or planned work be compared with established policies. It requires that quantity be appraised in terms of what was set forth as reasonable to expect under the existing conditions. It required that quality be examined in the light of standards of quality already agreed upon. And it requires a determination as to whether the methods used to complete the work were adequate to get the job done.

#### SIX MAJOR PRINCIPLES OF INSPECTION

There are about six major principles that must be observed in the making of inspections. A neglect of any one of these will lead to dissatisfaction. All must be observed, and all must be well known to everyone in the Service.

##### 1. Inspection is a line responsibility.

The responsibility for making an inspection belongs to the line official or administrator. It is he who must make them or arrange for them to be made. Staff assistants participate in making inspections, but only under the authority and at the direction of the responsible line official. The point here is that if any action is to be taken as a result of an inspection, the line officer has to take it. Staff officers cannot, unless directed to do so. In any case, wherever and whenever inspections are made, everyone concerned must be fully informed about the line authority back of the inspection. Staff officers assigned responsibility for making inspections, of course, are acting for line officers while they do so.

In this same connection, it has been found that too extensive delegation of the inspection function can defeat its purpose. It tends to make a special and separate function of inspection. In the end, the inspectors become a people apart, relatively out of touch with the line officers who must act upon their recommendations.

It should be pointed out also that various staff officers must inspect or review certain phases of the total program for which they are responsible. This is an important part of their work, and no specific delegation is required for it. In the end, of course, their findings and recommendations need to get into the "line" in order to become fully effective.

2. Inspection is a comparison of performance with established standards.

This principle is taken almost directly from the definition of inspection on page 6. No inspection is worth much if there are no standards to start with. It cannot be useful if the comparison is between performance and the inspector's opinion of what the performance should have been. There must be clearly established standards familiar to everyone that can be used as yardsticks.

The first thing a line officer has to do is to be sure that such standards have been established. There must be clearly written policies, proper specifications, adequate technical standards, all understood throughout the organization in his charge. An advance check may reveal that standards are vague, conflicting or lacking. The job then is to establish them, in advance of any inspection.

The conditions under which a man works must, of course, determine the standards for his performance. A man selling refrigerators in Florida would be expected to sell more than a man in Iceland. Similarly, a soil conservationist working in range country might be expected to cover more acres of land than one working on highly intensive irrigated land.

But there are many other factors than the physical factors of land. The attitude and beliefs of farmers are important. The climate is important, both as it affects land and people. The

customs of farmers, their degree of social organization, their "level" of education, their response to new ideas -- all play a part in Service work. Both the standards we use and the inspections we make must take these into full account.

3. Inspection is primarily of a line officer.

The idea here is simply this: Line officers are in charge of work in certain areas. They have staff help, but they are still responsible for all the work under their jurisdiction. They are equally responsible for the proper performance of their staff assistants. Thus, when an inspection is made of performance in a state, the burden of responsibility goes back to the State Conservationist. Only in a supplementary way is an inspection made of an assistant or staff officer.

4. Inspection must be systematic, regular and complete.

This principle seems reasonably obvious. If inspections are not regular, if men cannot count on them, if they lack continuity, then their value is reduced accordingly. If all offices are not inspected, but only some; if the inspections do not result in anything but a stirring up of personnel, if they are not part of a system of administration, then their value is diminished proportionately. If they are aimed at only one or two items, the emphasis they give may distort the importance of those items; if they are not complete, whatever they miss is left in the category of an unknown.

All these statements are negative. On the positive side we can say that the whole of our work must be completely examined at regular intervals as part of our administration, if we are to get full value from inspections. They cannot be put in second place by higher priority jobs. They must be made on reasonable schedule as an important part of our regular work.

5. Inspections must be recorded.

It is quite obvious that placing inspection results in writing is necessary if everyone is to understand fully what's to be done. While



it is true that oral, "gentlemen's agreements" are often satisfactory, there is too great an opportunity for misunderstanding, and people's memories are not always reliable.

An inspection report should contain the agreement reached between the inspector and the people being inspected, with appropriate provisions for later action. This is no more than a business-like way of conducting such work.

#### 6. Inspections must result in action.

Since inspections are examinations of performance, it is clear that what they do primarily is to reveal all the facts possible. In themselves, inspections do not result in action. A line officer has to take action on them. It is he who must commend men for good work. It is he who must arrange for help. It is he who must issue orders or directives based on inspection findings. And lastly, but very importantly, it is he who must follow up to see that the orders are carried out.

Action must result from inspection in all cases. And inspections need to be followed up in all cases. The administrator who takes no action will soon find that the values attached to good inspection will deteriorate. He may well find that inspections lead only to bitterness and discouragement, and that it were better for him if he had never undertaken them in the first place.

#### C. Evaluating People.

Men make good management possible.

Again let us discuss our most valuable asset -- people. We have talked about policies, standards and procedures, which tell us what to do, and how to perform a service or a job. We have also said that each person has his job described and has a Standard of Performance.

Work of individuals is measured.

As a part of the inspection system, the work of each individual is measured by performance, how well he does a job, how he cooperates with others, what his attitude toward his work is, how well he is accepted in his community.

Again the supervisor must know his people and the people must know what their jobs are.



Performance should be discussed with each individual.

Periodically every person should have his job performance discussed with him. The supervisor and employee should discuss how well a job is being done, what is expected, what weaknesses are, and what can be done for improvement. The summary of work performance is finally measured by an official performance rating, given at least annually. These ratings are based upon knowledge of actual records. Potentials are not measured here. The records show whether the performance is unsatisfactory, satisfactory or outstanding. An employee who has complete knowledge of what he is to do with a potential for doing outstanding work may fail to receive an outstanding rating or even a satisfactory rating because of some elements of undependability, such as carelessness, inaccuracy, poor attitude, being continually late to work, lack of cooperation, poor relations with farmers or a multitude of little sins.

Positions are audited.

Position descriptions describe what a job is, and Standards of Performance describe how it is to be done, and what quality and quantity are expected. Periodically these defined jobs are audited to see if what is described is being done, whether assignments have been changed, and whether standards have been met. These classification audits verify whether the grade level is correct, or whether the responsibilities described by classification standards are such that the position should be regraded.

The personnel officer is responsible for the accuracy of each job description and by on-site post-audit of positions he determines whether standards are met. His work is checked by responsible Bureau and Departmental specialists and by Civil Service Commission inspectors.

Civil Service Commission inspects.

About each 18 months the personnel activities of each state are inspected by representatives of the Civil Service Commission. The personnel program is studied. Analyses are made to determine the adequacy of job description. Do the jobs meet standards? Do employees understand the career program? Do they know what their appeal rights are? How well is training carried out? Do you have a plan for training? What does your safety program consist of? Do employees understand the incentive awards program and how well is it administered?

Most all of these concern people; how well they understand policies, standards and procedures; and most importantly, how well people use the policies, standards, and procedures.

D. Evaluating Material, Equipment and Use of Money.

Materials must be evaluated.

As has been mentioned materials, equipment, supplies and services do not manage themselves. We must evaluate their use in somewhat the same manner as we measure people.

We inspect our materials, equipment, supplies and services before we pay for them. When we receive a shipment of carbon paper, we determine by inspection whether it is the quantity or quality we ordered. We order red pencils and receive blue. The red pencils are for a specific job. Blue is not acceptable, so we sent the unacceptable pencils back to the vendor.

We have automobile mechanics to inspect our automotive equipment to see if it is safe for driving. If repairs are needed, we get the job done. The government pays for its purchases only after the goods or services are received in the right quantity and quality.

We keep property records and we check the property periodically to determine if we still have it. We control property by periodic checks. We annually reconcile the property on hand with what our records show we have.

We hold people accountable for safekeeping of property and for its proper use.

Standards for property are set.

The General Services Administration, which is the big governmental purchasing agent, sets standards for property and supplies to be purchased. Tests are made of all types of items purchased whether it be ink, pencils, paint, automobile or engineering equipment. Purchased goods must meet the specifications established.

Contractors must furnish materials meeting specification, and they must meet standards of manufacture and use of labor as prescribed by law.

Use of money must  
be evaluated.

Law and regulations are specific as to use of money. Administrative officials cannot use funds in ways not authorized by Congress. Funds designated for watershed protection must be used in watershed protection work. ACP funds, as an example, must be used on ACP work.

#### E. Records and Reports.

Reports are necessary.

Records and reports outline accomplishments and are a tool to be used by the supervisor as a yardstick for measuring what has been done, what needs to be done, and whether goals have been met. Neither records nor reports have value unless they are used. Reports made without purpose have little value. Unless both records and reports are studied to achieve objectives of greater accomplishments and higher efficiency, they are merely cluttering up files. Records and reports should be used as a basis for commendation of personnel or studied with them as a means for showing how accomplishments can be increased.

#### III. Taking Corrective Action When Necessary

Corrective action end-  
product of control.

One of the essentials of good managerial controls is provision for timeliness of corrective action. To diagnose a problem situation and develop means of correcting flaws in operations is not sufficient. Corrective measures must be put into effect immediately. Controls which are too late are as defective as controls which are too little. The nature of corrective action is determined by evaluation of results and by the authority of the particular line officer. The success of future action to correct or guide a situation depends upon recognizing the variables which caused the deviation to become an exception and upon a practical solution.

Correction may mean  
new start.

At times corrective actions start a new series of basic managerial steps - replanning, reorganizing, and so on. But more frequently, corrective actions merely remove hindrances or clarify procedures. The first 2 basic steps of control - setting standards and evaluating performance against these standards are really preliminary. They may be done to perfection and yet no control result unless all this checking has some influence on the behavior of people performing the actual operation. In other words, the third step, corrective action, is necessary before there is any real control.

No correction - no  
control.



Results can most  
always be improved.

Comparison of actual results with the established objectives and standards will almost always reveal some places where the results have not come up to expectations. As soon as this is discovered, it is the duty of the Administrator to take steps either to correct the past action or more likely, to bring similar action in the future closer to the desired goal.

Corrective action may be brought about by some combination of the following steps:

1. Adjust physical and external situations.

Differences between achievement and plans often result from shifts and unexpected obstacles in the work situation. Plans and goals are based on forecasts covering conditions under which the work will be performed and every line officer must spend a significant part of his time working on these factors attempting to make conditions conform to the forecasts or even more favorable for achieving the goals. The line officer must work in a variety of ways to create a setting in which the achievement of goals is unobstructed.

2. Review the direction, training and selection of personnel.

Individuals assigned work must be properly qualified and directed. All too often failure to meet standards can be traced to inadequate direction. Hence, the line officer needs to review again with his subordinates just what is wanted and how they should go about accomplishing it. There should be no second time for, "Oh, I didn't understand." Or perhaps the individual lacks training and experience for his assignment. The corrective action should then consist of providing this training as rapidly as possible.

Conditions must be  
right.

People must understand  
assignments. People  
need training.

Find the man to fit  
the job.

There may be occasions where the man lacks some of the basic abilities needed to do the job, or where it is impractical to place him in a position while he is growing up to it. In this case, transfer to work for which he is qualified and replacement by a more capable individual is the positive action required, provided such transfers can be made without serious disruption to morale.

### 3. Modify plans where necessary.

Corrective action usually includes at least some revision of plans. Many external forces cannot be adjusted by executive action. Consequently, there is need for continuing appraisal of results in terms of changing conditions and adjusting plans accordingly. When plans are changed, a new administrative cycle of planning, organizing, coordinating, directing and controlling is started.

### 4. Improve motivation.

Operating achievements may not have come up to standards, at least partly because the people doing the work didn't put forth enough effort. A desire to work with others in furthering the purposes of the enterprise is necessary if any work is to be done and this willingness to strive is particularly important when improvements in results are sought. Methods for improving motivation, therefore, may be essential to corrective action.

Find what motivates  
the individual.

### SUMMARY

Now let's look at our original objectives and see how well we have met them.

OBJECTIVE NO. 1 -- To understand and recognize controls.

We have learned that controlling is the process of determining whether or not actual operation is proceeding as desired and taking appropriate action as required. It involves 3 steps: setting standards, evaluating accomplishments against the standards, and taking corrective action. The last step is the key of effective control. Without it, the first two are meaningless.

OBJECTIVE NO. 2 -- To understand the need for controlling.

We have learned that every action however simple is guided by some form of control to insure that the action is legal, that it conforms to policy, that it is sound technically and that it contributes to the overall objectives of the Soil Conservation Service. Without controls, there could be no unified or corrected action toward the objective.

OBJECTIVE NO. 3 -- To learn how to use controls for evaluating performance and improving efficiency.

We have learned that controlling is a management responsibility. The line officer in SCS must understand the objectives of his operating unit and the standards required for these objectives. As the objectives or portions of them are accomplished, he must measure them against the standards. And finally and most important, he must take action to correct and improve all actions until they equal or exceed the standards. This is a continuing function of all line officers with assistance as needed from staff people.

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